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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this report are varied. The first, however, is to relate the birth of the statewide paraprofessional organization in New Hampshire. Included in the description of the New Hampshire program are the rationale that developed over a two-year period and the errors made by the group. The errors are a valuable and educational aspect and may save some other group time, energy, and frustration. The bulk of the report contains personal suggestions, thoughts, and directions for improved working relationships and more efficient, effective use of paraprofessionals. Most of the discussion and suggestions center on the effectiveness of paraprofessionals as it relates to the type of training made available, the working/human relationships established with administrative and teaching personnel, and the self-esteem gained by official recognition as a new "profession." Other topics discussed and recommended for further study are program evaluation, candidate selection, organization expansion, paraprofessional role expansion, and candidate competencies and training. (Author/IRT)

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PARAPROFESSIONALS IN EDUCATION

A DIRECTION WITH ALTERNATIVES

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INTRODUCTION

The National Education Association defines the paraprofessional as that segment of auxiliary personnel who "work directly with professional educators to assist them in discharging their professional duties--teacher aide, lay reader, instructional aide, and similar categories."[1]

Paraprofessional titles are many, position and responsibilities are varied; educational requirements, methods of training, and functions of state and local boards are relatively new areas of concern for educational administrators and teachers.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers estimate that by 1977, 1.5 million paraprofessionals will be employed in United States schools. Economist Leon H. Keyserling, in his projections on education manpower needs for this decade, predicts that the ratio will eventually become one non-professional staff member to every two teachers.[2]

This sizable segment of educational personnel has suffered from lack of understanding on the part of teachers and communities concerning their effectiveness within the educational process, improper funding procedures, and "trial and error" methods of program implementation.

Every social system involves a number of people working together in unique but cooperative ways to realize the attainment of some social ends. "There are few human service systems which do not employ paraprofessionals

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[1] Paraprofessionals in Schools: How New Careerists Bolster Education . Washington, D.C.: National Schools Public Relations Ass., p. 47

[2] Ibid., p.1.

and few treatments of human services which do not consider them. Education, itself the largest human service field, employs the most paraprofessionals." [3]

The most valuable and worthwhile aspect of paraprofessionals in education is their value in creating a more positive learning environment; one in which all children succeed, regardless of socio-economic and cultural background, standardized test scores and intelligence measurement, etc. Educational surroundings must contribute to a student's self-image, self-confidence, and sense of worth. Eugene Howard defines school climate "as an aggregate of social and cultural conditions which influence behavior in the school." His experience leads him to the conclusion that "an 'open' humane climate can stimulate learner initiative and creativity and will be likely to encourage attitudes of self-confidence, self-reliance, and independence." [4]

The only justification for the employment of aides in our public schools is a benefit to children. The introduction of such personnel must make a significant difference in the lives of those students who are involved. The children must be changed in important and desirable ways.

Support personnel offer a wealth of adult knowledge and skills found in every community more often to serve both the school population and the interested adults. Jack Frymier, author of Fostering Educational Change, attests to this belief:

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[3] College Programs for Paraprofessionals. New York: Human Service Press, 1975, (Introduction).

[4] Eugene K. Howard. "School Climate Improvement", Thrust for Educational Leadership, January, 1974, p. 12.

> ...education is too important to be left to the experts, or politicians, or businessmen, or any single group. Education is a social system with which all men must be concerned. [5]

The success of paraprofessional programs is strongly dependent upon the flexibility of the educational community. Support staff members offer to school the power to improve--to create a dynamic and responsive environment in which to educate its youth.

Teachers and administrators often reveal unwillingness and resistance to allowing non-professional staff direct classroom involvement. Much of this reluctance is embedded in their desire to protect their professional standing. In reality, their professionalism is only enhanced. Support personnel allow a teacher more time for the high-level teaching he/she is trained to carry out, and provide the opportunity for more personal involvement with students. Proper implementation of aide programs should also allow administrators to expend more time and energy on the management of the educational process and improvement of instruction rather than dealing with misbehaving children.

John McManama describes observable results when teachers are relieved of the tasks specified in the job description of paraprofessionals:

> ...Teachers will spend more time directly involved in such significant high-level teaching and learning functions as assessment of pupil needs, inquiry teaching, encouragement of creativity, evaluation of student progress, and personal guidance.
>
> ...Teachers will spend more time designing teaching strategies directed to achieving instructional objectives.

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[5] Jack R. Frymier. Fostering Educational Change. Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1969, p. 64.

> ...Teachers will be more personally involved with pupils.
>
> ...The basic skills program will improve because the knowledge of teachers will be utilized to manage the program while instructional aides are taking care of the routine aspects.
>
> ...Teachers will have more physical and mental energy to devote to their teaching. [6]

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this report are varied. The first is to relate the birth of the statewide paraprofessional organization in New Hampshire, followed by the initial and developing rationale over a period of two years. I think it wise also to recall the errors made to date by the N. H. Paraprofessionals. Though these errors are a valuable and educational aspect in themselves, perhaps some other group may be saved time, energy, and frustration by our efforts.

The bulk of this report, however, contains personal suggestions, thoughts, and directions for improved working relationships and more efficient, effective use of paraprofessionals. My observations are based on five years of varied experiences in elementary and secondary public schools, and most importantly, by interaction with hundreds of paraprofessionals and school administrators combined with an active interest in the future direction of paraprofessional participation within our educational systems.

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[6] John J. McManama. An Effective Program for Teacher-Aide Training. New York: Parker Publishing Company, 1972, P.16.

In Keene, New Hampshire, during the fall of 1974, following a change in school administration, the paraprofessionals employed in the school system were called together as an organization and asked to consider four items as goals for the year. The suggested goals were:

1. to compile a paraprofessional handbook,
2. to help develop an evaluation procedure,
3. to organize a statewide paraprofessional, conference for the purpose of updating skills and developing new ones,
4. to draw up a set of by-laws for the Keene Paraprofessional Association which up until this time had met at regular intervals on a social and informal basis.[7]

Hence, the first educational conference for paraprofessionals was suggested, launched and supported by the educational administration of Keene, N. H. The first conference, in April of 1975, directed and sponsored by the Keene Paraprofessional Association, drew one hundred seventy (170) participants from all parts of the state. Keene had the foresight to invite a representative from the State Department of Education as a participant.

Following the first conference, Keene personnel strongly encouraged participants from other geographical areas to join the efforts of the planning committee. They did not want future conferences to be their total responsibility, they felt the planning and future direction of the group would best be a shared responsibility by representatives of many geographical areas of the state. The statewide planning committee was now incorporated with representatives from Keene, Hanover, Manchester, Wolfeboro, and the Seacoast area. Planning began for the second conference.

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[7] Muriel Robbins, Past President/Negotiating Team, Keene Paraprofessional Association, to Helene J. O'Brien, February 18, 1977.

Talk of forming a statewide association of paraprofessionals was becoming widespread, however there seemed to be several divergent views concerning objectives and goals.

The second conference gathered one hundred fifteen (115) individuals in Waterville Valley, N. H. Evaluations indicated that fall would be a more appropriate time for future conferences since it is the most effective time to introduce and implement new concepts.

Following the second conference, the New Hampshire Commissioner of Education named a representative from the State Department of Education to our statewide planning committee. This important member provided us with a direct communication with the Commissioner, and also provided our committee with needed endorsement and support and credibility. This enabled us to promote our conference as "sponsored by the N. H. Department of Education"--an important step to being recognized by administrators statewide.

The third conference was held in October of 1976-six months following the previous conference. One hundred and seventy-five (175) participants attended the eighteen (18) educational modules presented, once again, in Waterville Valley, N. H.

I personally look upon the first three conferences of New Hampshire paraprofessionals as a 'preliminary' to the formal organization of educational personnel. The personal feedback and evaluations shared by the participants during the past two years have given us a definite direction, realistic objectives, and a knowledge of the educational, personal, and professional needs of this group of dedicated employees.

Frymier describes professionalism as involving at least four things: "service to others, making judgments, and the use of organization to impose a discipline upon those who veer from the written code..." "This organization," he states," enables those whose tasks involve helping others fulfill their role in the most effective way." [8]

Though paraprofessional do not generally make educational judgments, they are involved in service to others, and a 'professional' organization can serve to increase their awareness of the effect they have on children. It can also offer a strong sense of belonging to one group, a genuine "we" feeling, necessary to persons expecting to affect a change in students.[9]

This sense of belonging should primarily occur at the local level; paras should be accepted and integrated as team-members of the staff. This, however, is not occurring in many districts where aides are merely tolerated or assigned to menial tasks which offer no direct involvement in the educational process. Hence, any formal organization must serve as a support group.

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[8] Frymier, Fostering Educational Change, p. 42

[9] L. Festinger and others. Theory and Experiment in Social Communication: Collected Papers. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, 1951.

ERRORS/MISJUDGMENTS

Planning educational conferences and laying ground for a statewide organization are expansive projects to undertake. Misjudgments and oversights are a guaranteed side-effect. The only counteragent is the flexibility of the planning committee members to acknowledge errors and make the necessary adjustments. Some of the misjudgments and corrective procedures are listed here:

1. Lack of foresight to develop a standardized needs assessment, to be discussed in greater depth in the following section.
2. Placement of greater emphasis on the evaluation of specific workshop presenters rather than the overall conference benefits.
3. Failure to develop an effective method of compiling accurate workshop details from presenters. This led to several misinterpretations of workshop content and dissatisfied participants.

In the early planning stages of the fourth conference, an executive committee member designed what we expect to be an effecient, accurate method of gaining this information in order to accurately promote specific skill development. The suggested form, to be filled out by presenters, concisely requires all the needed information. (Refer to Appendix A).

4. Planners also failed to schedule an adequate amount of 'breathing space' and interaction time. In our zest to offer varied educational experiences, the committee overlooked the need for unstructured human interaction and the satisfaction derived from such successful meaningful relationships.
5. Any contemplation of statewide educational programs should be aware of judgments concerning the level of material presented. We initially presented workshops aimed at the individual with little or

no experience. We were unprepared to meet the needs of those with varied educational and experienced backgrounds; these individuals had participated in workshops, courses and/or self-directed learning. Many participants were seeking more advanced material and a deeper level of involvement than we were prepared to offer. Future workshops will be designated as 1. beginner; 2. for those with some background; 3. advanced, for the individual with greater experience in the educational field.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF N.H. PARAPROFESSIONALS

SURVEY - FUNCTIONS OF STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION

During the second conference , a survey concerning the possible functions of a statewide organization was distributed. One hundred fifty-six (156) forms were returned and tabulated. The results are presented here.

# of respondents	% of respondents	Function Suggested
39	25%	Supportive
38	24.5%	Informational
32	21%	Educational
29	18%	Standardize guidelines
8	5.1%	Legal Services
7	4.5%	Public Relations
3	2%	Placement & Employment

(Representative graph - Appendix B).

As the planning committee failed to foresee a need for standardization in evaluative procedures, compilation of accumulated data after three conferences was a complicated task, at best. From the beginning the stress had been primarily on evaluation of presenters and facilities and, lastly, on the individual educational needs of the participants.

The evaluation forms for each conference contained different formats; similar questions were asked at two of the three conferences, hence, the difference in the number of usable responses in each compilation.

Some items were relatively simple to compile , such as:

254 responses indicated by a margin of 253 to 1 that the conference participants favor annual workshops.

88 responses indicated by a margin of 84 to 4 that the participants favor a formal statewide organization.

DATA COMPILATION/EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The following information was collected and tabulated from various evaluation forms and questionnaires distributed at three conferences. The participants were asked to suggest future topics to be offered to para-professional personnel. The data is based on one hundred seventy-seven usable responses.

# responses	% responses	Workshops to provide:
63	36%	Skills to meet the needs of 'special children'.
31	18%	Specific teaching skills
31	18%	Skills in Library/Media
26	15%	Exposure to various enrichment activities
23	13%	Communication skills

Further breakdown of these statistics include:

	# Responses	% Responses
'Special Children"		
Learning disabled	21	12%
Socially disabled	21	12%
Mainstreaming	12	7%
Gifted Children	9	5%
Teaching skills		
Mechanics of reading	14	8%
Remediation	12	7%
Mathematics	5	3%
Library/Media		
Library	17	10%
Media/AV	14	8%
Enrichment Activities		
Hands on games & activities	7	4%
Drama/Literature	7	4%
Health/PE	5	3%
Music	5	3%
Arts & Crafts	4	2%
Communication Skills		
Co-worker	12	7%
Student	11	6%

(Representative graph - Appendix C)

I have labeled the following data "professional priorities" because they are the primary concerns, at this time, of the members of this new profession. They are common concerns regardless of school district or job description. Data based on one hundred seventy-seven usable responses.

PROFESSIONAL PRIORITIES

# of respondents	% of respondents	Professional concerns
69	39%	Popularization of certification & standards
57	32%	Legal responsibility and liability
51	29%	Promote & develop in-service programs

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

A yearly gathering of paraprofessionals gives us the opportunity to survey participants. However, we must not overlook the important information gathered by the many face to face discussions held during such an event. Those individuals who are involved in planning future conferences must be especially 'open' to both positive and negative feedback of participants.

The ability to formulate statistics from surveys is important because there is no available data concerning N. H. paraprofessionals. The State Department of Education cannot provide such simple statistics as: the number of paras employed in N. H. schools, or an average salary of such employees; since some school districts do not report such information.

There is a need for a standardized 'needs assessment' to simplify the process of measuring the educational, as well as the personal and professional needs of participants. This 'needs assessment' must allow some flexibility for future modification however, any suggestions for change should bear in mind the stated objectives of a standardized process of evaluating needs:

1. to simplify the process of assessing educational, personal and professional needs,
2. to facilitate tabulation,
3. to apply results in conjunction with personal feedback,
4. to provide statistical data which could be useful for future growth of organization.

Yearly implementation of this survey will allow the organization to formulate information concerning employment conditions, salaries, educational levels, etc., and provide a prioritized selection of workshop/seminar suggestions. It will also provide updated direction and suggested functions for the statewide organization and its expansion.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE PARAPROFESSIONALS

NAME (optional) _____ S. U. # (optional) _____

LENGTH OF TIME EMPLOYED _____ PART-TIME: _____ HRS./WK.

PAID _____ VOLUNTEER _____ FULL-TIME: _____ HRS./WK.

SALARY RANGE (check one)

___ under $2000 yearly

___ $2000 - $2500

___ $2501 - $3000

___ $3001 - $3500

___ $3501 - $4000

___ above $4000

EDUCATION

Circle last grade attended:

8 9 10 11 12

College: 1 2 3 4

NOW ATTENDING: _____ _____

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT? _____

ARE YOU OFFERED IN-SERVICE TRAINING? _____

CHECK BENEFITS OFFERED TO YOU:

___ HEALTH INSURANCE

___ LIFE INSURANCE

___ SICK DAYS

___ PERSONAL DAYS

___ N. H. RETIREMENT SYSTEM

___ PERSONAL LIABILITY

___ CONTRACT / WORK AGREEMENT

DO YOU INTERACT WITH STUDENTS DAILY? _____

(check one) LEVEL:

___ PRIMARY

___ ELEMENTARY

___ MIDDLE

___ SECONDARY

ARE YOU ASKED TO SUPERVISE CHILDREN ALONE? _____

ARE YOU ASKED TO SUBSTITUTE TEACH? _____

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN YOUR POSITION: (check 1 or 2)

____ INSTRUCTIONAL - CLASSROOM

____ INSTRUCTIONAL - TUTORIAL

____ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

____ CLERICAL

____ LIBRARY

____ MEDIA - AV

____ MONITORIAL

____ OTHER _____
PLEASE SPECIFY

PLEASE LIST 3 EDUCATIONAL TOPICS, IN ORDER OF PRIORITY, WHICH YOU FEEL WOULD BE VALUABLE TO YOU IN YOUR PRESENT POSITION. THE LIST BELOW IS MERELY A COMPILATION OF SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD YOUR OWN.

PLEASE INDICATE LEVEL: P = Primary M = Middle
E = Elementary S = Secondary

_____ _____
Topic # 1 Level

_____ _____
Topic # 2 Level

_____ _____
Topic # 3 Level

SUGGESTED TOPICS

AV EQUIPMENT & TECHNIQUES
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES
METHODS TO ENCOURAGE READING
LISTENING ACTIVITIES
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
REMEDIAL READING
MAKE IT/GAMES & ACTIVITIES
DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR TECHNIQUES
LIBRARY METHODOLOGY
HEALTH & FIRST-AID
COMMUNICATION SKILLS
MANSTREAMING
OBSERVING BEHAVIOR
DRAMA IN THE CLASSROOM
MUSIC
LEGAL ASPECTS OF SUPERVISING CHILDREN

PLEASE LIST 3 SUGGESTED FUNCTIONS AND/OR DIRECTIONS FOR OUR PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Paraprofessionals are employed in hundreds of different positions in the schools of New Hampshire with various degrees of 'job description' accuracy. Many educational writers have attempted to breakdown job assignments into neat classifications. I believe this is a waste of time since I have not yet seen a single classification system which accurately includes all the task differentiations of which I am personally aware.

The broad range of topics and the equitable distribution of participants indicate that paraprofessional personnel are functioning in numerous roles, at ambiguous levels, and in various disciplines--all pertinent to the education of children.

I do, however, feel safe in implying that all of the paraprofessionals employed within the educational system must interact with other people. For some, this interaction is primarily with the professional staff, for others, primarily with students; however, because of the supportive nature of the position----that interaction must be occuring. 36% of the respondents suggested educational topics to help them meet the needs of 'special children'. Certainly, a knowledge of learning disabilities, of causes and influences concerning the socially disabled child, and of practical and useful techniques to help mainstream physically, socially, and emotionally handicapped children into the classroom are useful, perhaps necessary.

Nevertheless, can an individual with all these skills be truly effective if he/she cannot communicate productively with teachers, specialists, and the students themselves? Educational research acknowledges these competencies.

There is a general category of tasks that are difficult to define relating to listening,

supporting, emphasizing, inspiring, or serving as a trouble shooter. [10]

Can an individual tutor or reinforce skills effectively if one cannot accept and encourage children? The broadest educational philosophy includes accepting a child where he is, and moving him forward.

Teacher-para teams necessitate the establishment of working relationships between adults in face-to-face contact. Experience has shown that the closer the teacher-para working relationship, the more children will benefit. [11] This relationship is a difficult on and takes time, as well as a degree of interpersonal skills, to develop.

It is nearly impossible to be employed in an elementary or a secondary school and not influence children, since the adults in families and in schools are "people-makers". Children need all the help they can get to become "human beings living humanly", defined by Satir as "a person who understands, values, and develops his body, finding it beautiful and useful; a person who is real and honest to and about himself and others; a person who is willing to take risks, to be creative, to manifest competencies, to change when the situation calls for it, and to find ways to accomodate to what is new and different, keeping that part of the old that is still useful and discarding what is not." [12]

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[10] U.S. Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare, Office of Education. PREP Brief No. 12B. (Washington:Government Printing Office) p.3.

[11] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 17.

[12] Virginia Satir. Peoplemaking. Palo Alto, Calif: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972.

Paraprofessionals, regardless of assigned tasks, are a part of this process of "people-making"."

I conclude that paras need to update skills in the teaching of reading and math, developing enrichment activities, mastering the automated, multi-media world of education, howerver, this knowledge must be integrated with continuing and developing human-relations since education is carried out in an environment of close interpersonal relationships.

There is an urgent need for educators to devote more time to helping students learn how to learn, nevertheless, we cannot expect a teacher to be able to deal effectively with all children. This is not to be interpreted as a reflection on the capabilities of the teacher, but really as a recognition of individual differences. As parents, most of us are aware that there are some things other people can do for our children that we ourselves cannot. Are professional educators so much more effective?

MEETING NEEDS OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

Silberman states in his book, Crisis In the Classroom that:

> ...children are taught a host of lessons about values, ethics, morality, character, and conduct every day of the week, less by the content of the curriculum than by the way schools are organized, the ways teachers and parents behave, the way they talk to children and to each other, the kinds of behavior they approve or reward and the kinds they disapprove or punish.[13]

Educational paraprofessionals are an important element of progressive school organization. Their behavior and relationships can have postitive or

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[13]Charles E. Silberman. Crisis In The Classroom. New York: Random House, 1970, p. 9.

negative effects on student behavior and attitudes. Hence, it is very important that they be capably trained in the instructional, social, and technical aspects of their position. They are the most knowledgeable concerning their roles and influences, therefore the direction of their education should be influenced by their input. Too often teachers and administrators have initiated and developed training programs for paraprofessionals without any input from those employed in the position. Granted, administrators and teachers should develop introductory programs concerning individual school philosophy, policies, and specific assignments, but once an aide has been employed for a period of time, and the role has been expanded and clarified; he or she is the best judge of relevant educational experiences and direction.

PROJECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT

The projected accomplishment of providing appropriate educational programs for paras is the expansion of skills necessary to fulfill the often flexible role and to better fill the individual needs of students and teachers. Principals extol this flexible role.

From a Washington, D.C. administrator:

> We expect them (paraprofessionals) to be flexible and ready to help children in ways not necessarily specified in their job descriptions--whether it is an emergency like our hot lunch program or in an ongoing science experiment in a classroom. [14]

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[14] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 41

And from Fairfax County, Virginia, a principal claims he practically couldn't open the school without teacher aides, says their all-round usefulness reminds him of his experience on a General Motors assembly line years ago.

> There were a lot of little parts that didn't quite fit together and we would use this miraculous compound (we called it 'gook') to fill in the spaces.
>
> That's what our teacher aides do---fill in all the spaces in our school. [15]

An extremely large percentage of the children in our modern schools come from homes characterized by one of the following:

economic insecurity
marital conflict
parental brutality
lack of social ties.

The offspring of these families often suffer from distortion of reality, trouble in handling anxiety and frustration, unfortunate view of self, difficulty with self-control and inadequate relations with other people.

Frymier contends that because each learner is unique in terms of his purposes, motivations, and creative experiences, the task of providing adequate effective instruction for millions of students is an unbelievably complicated chore. [16]

Preparing these children for effective relationships and for life-long well-being is facilitated by the use of extra responsible adults in our schools.

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[15] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 64

[16] Frymier, Fostering Educational Change, p. 62.

The student benefits in many ways:

1. the additional advantage of the knowledge and talents of the aide,
2. the extra 'eyes and ears' alert to individual needs. The para with special skills and/or with a similar background may be able to identify with the child more readily and to interpret problems more effectively to the classroom teacher,
3. the increased attention provides a greater feeling of security for the child and fosters increased achievement.

A well-balanced intellectual diet for today's youngsters demands new models of home-school community partnerships. We can give them no less! [17]

In summary, meeting the educational needs of paraprofessionals is a worthwhile venture. Our children, teachers, and schools and communities have everything to gain, very little to lose. Nevertheless, there exists several ways of fulfilling these educational needs, and many divergent opinions concerning the effectiveness of one vehicle versus another.

[17] Betty Artwell Wright. Teacher Aides To The Rescue. New York: The John Day Company, 1969, p. 50.

VEHICLES FOR MEETING NEEDS

LOCAL IN-SERVICE

The strongest argument in favor of local pre- and in-service training is that education should directly reflect local desires and aspirations. Training at this level can and should consider the social and cultural background of the community, and can foster a greater understanding of various groups and grouping patterns.

In New Hampshire, however, opportunities for local training programs are hampered by exhausted budgets each year due to deficient state-level educational support. When communities are consistently faced with increased property taxes due to school expenditures, in-service staff training is often relegated to the end of the priority list.

Many states require team-training---preparing the teacher and the aide as a 'team'. Arizona, for example, suggest a continuing process of training, starting in the aide's pre-service period. [18]

Such regulations and guidelines necessitate local training and most probably offer the highest potential for program success since teachers are exposed to the most effective strategies for team effectiveness.

In-service training in human relationships attempts to humanize the educational experience for children, as well as foster a sense of staff unity and team approach. Carl Rittenhouse believes that aides should be integrated with other staff members as much as possible, governed by the same administrative procedures and eligible for the same services." [19]

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[18] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 25-26.

[19] Ibid., p. 39.

One of the ways to achieve this goal is total staff participation in training programs at regular intervals during the school year. This training should include participation in staff meetings and school-community meetings as new interests and associations lead many paraprofessionals toward semi-instructional and instructional duties.

However, training which is limited to local pre- and in-service is often quite narrow in scope. This training background does not always allow for presentation of widely used educational methods and philosophies. These practices can limit the all-round effectiveness of the career-bound paraprofessional. In addition, programs offering a broader knowledge of instructional and social techniques, and adequately prepared resources, can provide greater diversity of employable skills.

In one district of southern New Hampshire, there exists some dissension over allowing paras to attend the same in-service workshops as professionals teachers. The problem, as I perceive it, is the inability of both teachers and paras to fully understand each others' role within the institution.

Non-professional staff are often insensitive to the 'threat' that they can pose to teachers, especially in districts where the professional staff had little input into the development of "aide programs". Teachers, in turn, are often intolerant of the needs of assistants assigned to their classrooms with a minimal amount of staff integration and training. Thus, there has developed a 'need' on the part of teachers to protect themselves against further invasion of better skilled personnel.

In anticipation of the day when teacher-para 'team-training' is an accepted and well-funded policy, alternate vehicles must be investigated since many high-

potential aides are stranded in menial jobs because they lack the time, money, and opportunity to seek further training.

The National Committee on Employment of Youth (NCEY) points out that professionals get time off, with pay, to further their education, and argues that the same opportunities should be offered to parpaprofessional staff members.[20]

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

The roles of the post-secondary institutions in relation to meeting the needs of New Hampshire paraprofessional personnel are twofold:

1. their role in preparing personnel for non-professional, supportive positions within the public education system, and
2. their role in preparing the professional personnel in the most effective use of support-instructional staff.

College programs for paraprofessionals represent the convergence of at least two lines of recent development--first, the increasing employment of paraprofessional in human service work, and, second, the growing number of college programs designed for those other than middle-and upper-class youth.[21]

As these institutions strive to meet the educational demands of mature adults, curriculums are often directed toward career programs. Such is the case of educational, library, or media assistant programs in some states. Many schools have adopted procedures

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[20] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 53

[21] College Programs for Paraprofessionals, (Intro.)

to grant college credit for in-service training and classroom experience.

Junior and senior colleges, as well as universities, should organize programs for auxiliary personnel, and school districts should incorporate them as an integral part of the system, rather than an 'extraneous'and temporary addition.

The college campus can best provide the resources valuable to the technical/instructional preparation of non-professional staff. They can also supply a broader knowledge of human support fields relevant to education. They can offer exposure to a survey of procedures, working with groups, organizing instruction, value of individualized instruction, and handling multiple resources.

The college instructor is also often more effective in teaching vital communication skills than a co-worker.

The programs offered to New Hampshire residents, however, are few. The Merrimack Valley Branch of the University of New Hampshire offers an associate degree program for library assistants, and I have been unable to learn of any other. The university system is not a viable alternative for the education of paraprofessionals due to the extremely high cost. The cost of a two year program in the N. H. university system would approach the $2600 mark--not a realistic alternative for a position whose earning potential is approximately $3000 per year.

The most hopeful alternative for N. H. individuals is the Vocational-Technical schools, comparable to the Community Colleges of Massachusetts. These schools are accredited colleges and provide high-quality education at a moderate cost.

John McManama proposes that an associate degree should not be established as an entry requirement but should be established as a way in which instructional-aides can increase their salary. [22]

What are teacher education programs doing to prepare the new personnel?... Virtually nothing! If teacher education programs don't begin asking and attempting to answer the question, the responsibilities will be assumed in a less effective manner by public schools, publishers, and other educational alternatives. These sources all have a value, however, they do not have as their primary goals: the training of educational personnel whose primary role is one of affecting young people.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

New Hampshire "Special Education" legislation, effective July 1, 1965, states as its purpose:

> ...to provide the best and most effective education possible to all handicapped (physically, intellectually, emotionally) children in New Hampshire.

The State Board of Education is authorized to establish a program of special education within the funds appropriated or available. [23]

Nevertheless, most funds for special education must be made available in local budgets. The state-wide budget 'crunch' of the last few years had caused paring down of specialists trained in various student

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[22] McManama, An Effective Program for Teacher-Aide Training, p. 174.

[23] New Hampshire State Dept. of Education. Program of Special Education. Chap. 186-A:1 &2. Concord.

disabilities, hence, the loss of structured programs to aid learning 'handicapped' children.

M. Stephen Lilly addresses the question of special education by stating:

> ...thus far it has not been demonstrated that such separation (e.g. into special classes) has had a significant effect on academic learning or social adjustment. [24]

Mainstreaming 'special needs' children is a development which has led many teachers to actively seek out new organizational patterns for their classrooms.

College programs can be of great assistance in preparing paraprofessionals for these specialized roles in education. These positions demand high-level awareness to the problems and concerns of these children and their families.

Educating these students in the classroom is a time and energy consuming task for the lone teacher, however, "if the teacher is assisted by an aide,... development may be more ensured in the ordinary grade placement. [25]

One needs that so far is almost totally unmet is the inclusion of training in the use of aides in teacher education courses, ... since aides are a permanent and growing part of American education, it is essential that training for their use be provided.

Over the last three years, I have observed the implementation and development of various para-programs within the state. I believe the most prevalent reason for failure or ineffectiveness in these programs is the lack of knowledge concerning the effecient use of and management of support staff.

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[24] M. Stephen Lilly. "Special Education-A Co-operative Effort", Theory Into Practice, April, 1975, p. 86.

[25] "Perceptual and Learning Disability: A Definition and Projection". Educational Leadership, May, 1975, p. 500-501.

We, as a society, have asked much of our public school teachers; they are expected to be secretaries, nurses, babysitters, counselors, classroom managers, instructors, etc. By the introduction of support staff, we ask them to manage personnel--- a task for which they are unprepared.

Teachers will not make effective use of classroom assistants until they are offered adequate and relevant exposure to the skills necessary to implement this new organizational pattern into their classrooms.

Georgia has instituted licensing and training requirements for both paraprofessionals and the professionals with whom they will work.

> No auxiliary personnel can be utilized without preservice training which can be conducted in a local school system, a voc-technical school, or a junior or senior college program.
>
> Furthermore,the new requirements state that classroom teachers and principals must also have training. No auxiliary personnel shall be assigned to work under the professional until such professional (including the building principal) has participated in or is currently participating in an adequate (state-approved) program designed to secure the most effective use of auxiliary personnel.[26]

Such legislation may seem unduly strong; but I'm sure that the cost of implementation is better spent than the wastefulness of competent personnel relegated to menial tasks while children miss pricelss opportunities for enrichment and stimulation.

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[26] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 27.

STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION

When in-service training is unavailable or inadequate, and college programs are not relevant to paraprofessional needs, they have the option of developing and initiating educational opportunities for themselves. This can be accomplished at the local level, but many New Hampshire districts do not employ a sufficient number of paras. to make this venture worthwhile. In the larger city schools, support staff can and should develop programs to meet their needs.

The paraprofessionals of New Hampshire, however, have chosen to present various educational workshops via a yearly conference. The role of this conference and organization of individuals is specifically to meet the educational, personal, and professional needs of support staff employed in schools.

A few states have already gone this organizing route. One such state is Minnesota, where about 2,000 paraprofessionals work in various school districts. A statewide auxiliary personnel association has been set up under the direction of a former Minneapolis school aide, who works at the headquarters of the Minnesota Educational Association.[27]

Membership in a statewide association of of paras will not affect the value of communal horizons. The act of involvement and joining an association with its broader goals will help change his/her self-concept from that of only a teacher-aide to that of a paraprofessional educator.

The National Educational Association (NEA) stresses the "institutionalization" of paras and other auxiliary personnel by means of a formal structure through which they are trained, licensed, recruited, classified, evaluated, and provided with opportunities for advancement.[28]

[27] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 47

[28] Ibid.

The State Department of Education shoudl establish machinery for devising quidelines for school districts in setting up reasonable proficiency requirements. A broad cross-section of the profession should be involved in formulating the guidelines and setting requirements. They should consider and develop methods of protecting auxiliary personnel from exploitation as well as protecting teachers and students. I also feel that leeway for experimentaion should be encouraged because we lack available research concerning the most effective use of support staff.

The New Hampshire State Dept. of Education has instituted procedures for licensing of paraprofessionals, however, until recently most non-professional personnel were unaware of the requirements and standards. The procedures have not been implemented because the department lacks the personnel for proper regulatory measures.

The N. H. Paras have been fortunate in their affiliation with the State Dept. of Education because there exists a productive two-way communication of goals , procedures, and problems. The committee has worked freely toward meeting the goals of its informal membership. We have functioned with the support and constructive input of the State Department and Commissioner through our liaison member.

The objectives of this new organization directly reflect the needs of its participants. Though the actual sampling is limited, the reinforcement by personal communication with various committee members assures that theses objectives will be ratified by the membership. Theses objectives have been discussed with the Commissioner of Education and the Superintendents and have their support.

OBJECTIVES OF ORGANIZATION

EDUCATIONAL

To provide a selection of seminars and workshops in various disciplines applicable to paraprofessionals, in order to update skills and to expose participants to new ideas and techniques.

These educational experiences must be varied enough to meet the needs of personnel employed in many areas of education: administration, counseling, community, instructional, clerical and social services. Though paras are not in positions to modify policies and directions of the respective institutions, they can and should be prepared to meet the redesigns of education which must occur from time to time.

Paras should be encouraged to take part in training sessions related to developing personal growth in children because, as Silberman points out,

> ...Students need to learn for more than the basic skills. For children who may still be in the labor force in year 2030, nothing could be more wildly impractical than an education designed to prepare them for specific vocations or professions or to facilitate their adjustment to the world as it is. ... This can be done by teaching them how to learn, by giving them the kind of intellectual discipline that will enable them to apply man's accumulated wisdom to new problems as they arise----[29]

These workshops should be conducted, at the very least, yearly. At this time, participants should be offered a selection of topics from which they might choose. Thus a member of the organization can be guaranteed a minimum of three educational workshops at the conference.

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[29] Silberman, Crisis In The Classroom, p.113-114

If regional groups develop, as an extension of the statewide organization, their objectives could include regional educational offerings by local, experienced, and effective paraprofessionals, as well as teachers and administrators.

INFORMATIONAL

By means of newsletters and bulletins, as well as conferences, keep paras informed of continuing education such as courses, workshops, etc. They should also be updated concerning legislation and directives which might affect their positions and responsibilities. This service should also relate the success and/or failure of innovative programs within the state and elsewhere, utilizing auxiliary personnel, and the activities of local and regional groups.

SUPPORT

The educational and informational activities of this organization will provide a support group of people who share common causes--"to personalize and improve education." Within this process, they share similar responsibilities, concerns, satisfactions, and frustrations.

The realm of creating a supportive organization must include encouraging administrators and teachers, as well as school board members to participate in conferences. Their active support will promote a greater 'team aspect', conducive to the improvement of working relationships.

Personnel which are better educated, better informed and better supported will create improved educational environments and increased effectiveness in human and working relationships. These, in turn, will positively affect students, teachers, administrators,

and paraprofessionals themselves.

All education, information, and support offered to paraprofessionals must maintain relevance---relevance to education as well as to the responsibilities assigned to non-professional personnel. James Fisher maintains that

> ...educational methods, techniques, even subject matter, must frequently by tested against the nature and needs of our society to ascertain their relevance...Our progress in educational relevance, just as our progress in social relationships with our fellowman, has lagged behind our ability, even our willingness, to provide for it.[30]

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[30] James L. Fisher. The New Teacher Education: Prospects for Change, The Teacher and His Staff: Differentiating Teaching Roles. Washington: National ED. Association of U.S., 1969, p. 59.

COMPETENCIES

Most educational writers elect to design lists of tasks and job assignments with regard to non-professional staff. Since policies, staffing patterns,personnel, and types of assistance needed vary from district to districtand, often, from school to school within the same community, I find theses lists valuable only as suggestions and experiences of various administrators.

Research indicates that it is perhaps desireable that no list of duties be prepared at the beginning of a program and that, under the leadership of the teacher, and administrative staff, functions evolve as teacher and aide work together. [31]

Establishing 'competencies' valuable in an educational setting seems a much more practical alternative. These competencies, though perhaps more difficult to assess, are offered as guidelines for administrators and teachers, as well as paraprofessionals. These should be the factors considered when developing programs for training as well as for offering life experience credit in colleges. Time in a position is certainly not a viable gauge of knowledge without verification.

For example, an individual could be employed for several years in a classroom with a teacher. Though she may be familiar and comfortable with the techniques of this specific teacher---who may or may not be interpersonally competent--- her experience of three years denotes little, if any, flexibility or knowledge of the physical and emotional development of children. If this para has worked in a traditionally structured classroom, she may or may not be acquainted with the scope and sequence of skills, and the value of

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[31] U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education. PREP Brief No, 12B, p.8.

individualized instruction, differentiated staffing patterns, etc.

In order to assess the effectiveness of this employee in a new setting, a list of competencies is clearly in order since the broad variation in legal requirements, in educational environments, and in local needs makes it impossible to write job descriptions or lists of duties that are rigidly applicable even in a majority of situations.[32]

In a recent survey of New Hampshire teachers, they overwhelmingly reinforced my belief that social skills are equally as important as instructional skills in the total effectiveness of support staff. The survey form and its results are stated here in its entirety.

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To Teachers of _____,

If given the advantage of properly/adequately trained support personnel in your classroom, which training background would most closely meet your needs:

CHECK ONE

(17) 1. INSTRUCTIONAL: Sensitive to the needs of students of your grade level, trained in teaching and remedial methods, can reinforce skills taught; can function as a tutor or work with small groups within classroom.

(0) 2. SOCIAL: Sensitive to the needs of students in your grade level, trained in techniques to increase self-confidence, self-esteem, and social maturation; could foster sense of responsibility and awareness of students' environment.

(97) 3. TRAINED in both aspects (#1 &2); can be effective in varied classroom situations.

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[32] Ibid., p. 1.

Of the one hundred fourteen (114) teachers replying, ninety-seven chose number 3 and seventeen chose number 1. No teacher chose an individual trained in social areas alone --however, few chose to select the candidate with instructional skills only.

Though the survey is limited in number; many typical communities were represented: Manchester, Hanover, Lyme, Hampton, Bakersville, Seabrook, etc.

Most training programs and written guidelines stress instructional skills, this survey, however, indicates that teachers are aware of the importance of social skills and their effectiveness within the educational environment. The knowledge of instructional methods, without adequate interpersonal skills, or vice-versa, should be considered limiting to the paraprofessional seeking employment and to the administrator seeking an effective candidate.

I propose this extensive schedule of competencies to allow a degree of flexibility to those individuals considering its application. No listing, however complete, can meet the needs of every position, every individual, or situation.

Paraprofessionals should exhibit:

- proficiency in the keeping and proper use of records
- proficiency in typing
- working knowledge of office machines
- knowledge of relative costs of various copying techniques and effectiveness
- an understanding of the scope and sequence of skills; i.e.,.that the ability to perform one task depends on its prerequisites
- 'common sense' knowledge of child development; emotional, social, physical and academic.
- an understanding of the rationale for prevalent forms of school organization: team teaching, differentiated staffing, non-grading, heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping, etc.

- an understanding of the new approaches to teaching and learning; programmed instruction, student team learning, inquiry teaching, units of instruction, learning centers, etc.
- a good understanding of individualized instruction.
- an understanding of the positive/negative effect he/she may have on students.
- an interest in self-improvement.
- an understanding of the community culture and mores.
- proficiency in the observing of and nonjudgmental reporting of behavior.
- proficiency in 'active' listening skills.
- knowledge of how and when to encourage children to promote favorable behavior
- an understanding of the importance of sound emotional and social conditions within the classroom.
- a philosophy of education in keeping with the school's.
- an understanding of the strengths and pitfalls of testing, i.e., that pure tests are impossible in most situations.
- a general flexibility necessary in various school situations.

In order to assess these competencies, I suggest a simple test, of True or False format, as a preliminary screening device. This test, combined with a personal interview, will determine the most flexible, knowledgable, personable candidate for your position.

The questions in the test should be adapted to the specific priorities of the school, teacher, or classroom which will adopt the new employee.

Sample test included on page 37 and 38.

PARAPROFESSIONAL SCREENING TEST

CIRCLE TRUE (T) OR FALSE (F).

1. Children should be told the reasons for rules and regulations that are made. T - F
2. To train children in courtesy, it is sufficient to tell them to be courteous. T - F
3. A child should be able to 'classify objects' before he can 'discriminate between them'. T - F
4. Good discipline requires perfect quiet in the class. T - F
5. Rewards may be an abuse as well as a use in teaching. T - F
6. The best kind of discipline is that which is self-directed. T - F
7. Increasing self-confidence in students is not the responsibility of school personnel. T - F
8. Words of praise and recogniation spoil the child. T - F
9. An exception to the rule is never permissible. T - F
10. It is advisable for the sake of variety to frequently change the meeting place of the class. T - F
11. Order is essential for good discipline. T - F
12. In relating student behavior to a teacher, it is wise to add your personal interpretation. T - F
13. The prompt beginning and dismissal of the class aid in maintaining good discipline. T - F
14. Lavish prize-giving is highly recommended. T - F
15. The purpose of a set routine for certain procedures is to economize time and effort. T - F
16. It is important that each school situation or classroom make comparable demands on the support staff. T - F

17. The teacher should never allow children to shout out answers to questions. T - F

18. The number of regulations should be kept to a minimum. T - F

19. To greet pupils with a smile and a friendly word is to lower one's dignity and lessen the teacher's authority. T - F

20. Student achievement is rarely affected by adult expectations. T - F

21. A long list of rules and regulations is a sign of good discipline. T - F

22. It is not necessary for the teacher to say "Please" and "Thank you" when speaking to his pupils. T - F

23. Reverence is manifested outwardly by politeness. T - F

24. A warning look is often better than an impatient correction. T - F

25. Effective communication with teachers is less important than effective communication with students. T - F

26. The interaction of adults with children has no effect on instruction. T - F

ELEMENT OF THREAT

An organization of personnel within any system poses some degree of threat to administrative forces. This sense of threat is certainly understandable and valid since negotiations and bargaining now account for large quotas of administrators' time, energy, and frustration. However, this element of threat must be reduced in order for paraprofessional organizations to succeed. Administrative support is a MUST. The organization can achieve its objectives without this support but its total effectiveness will be diminished.

Research indicates that if the principal sees the aide as a source of help in flexible scheduling, in grouping children by need or interest, in developing interest centers in the classroom, and ultimately in developing some individualization of instruction, the teachers will, too.[33]

Support for paras can be achieved most effeciently beginning at the top and moving, naturally, down the hierarchical ladder; that is, from Commissioner, to Superintendents, to school boards, and to principals, and finally to teachers.

Once assured of the Commissioner's support, N. H. paras suggested that their representative personally inform the superintendents of plans to formalize the organization and state its goals. By invitation of the Commissioner of Education, a committee member appeared to present the data compilation of educational needs and objectives of its new association at a monthly meeting of Superintendents.

A friend and employer once stated to me that ,

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[33] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 18.

".... Superintendents react most negatively to surprises! They like to know what is happening in their districts." Thus, the element of surprise was eliminated along with a positive supportive attitude demonstrated by their superior.

An N. E. A. research publication has established that

> ...the hope of solving whatever problems stand in the way of developing school aide programs may be in the superintendent's willingness to engage in social engineering. And so across the nation the call is for superintendents who are, in fact, educational statesmen.[34]

Principals also have key roles in the implementation of programs utilizing paras, since they are concerned with the hiring, placement, and overall supervision of such personnel in their schools.

Informational and support techniques will not alter all administrative fears, their experience of the past decade with organizations of personnel demand a hesitant reaction. This reluctance can be affected, over a period of time, by an earnest attempt on the part of the Paraprofessional leadership to work productively with administrators statewide---to consider their input and react to their needs when they are not in conflict with the needs of members.

Many local para groups in New Hampshire are experiencing dissension with their professional co-workers and administrators of their districts. In response to this disunion they are seeking alternate forms of support. Many are investigating unionization within NEA or AFT in order to gain bargaining clout.

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[34] Gertrude Noar. Teacher Aides At Work. National Education Association. Washington: 1967, p. 31.

I, personally, do not regard unionization-national affiliation- within these groups as a viable alternative at this time, and under most conditions.

Aides have always been welcome to join the 1.1 million-member association of NEA (National Educational Association), but only as associate members, and by paying regular dues. This membership includes no voting privileges.[35]

In an association which is mainly concerned with protecting the rights of teachers, paraprofessional priorities will undoubtedly be delegated to the bottom of the list. Membership is any organization which uses the aggressive tactics associated with labor organizations is directly in conflict with the stated objectives of the para association.

NEA proposes that the organizing of auxiliary personnel be done from the ground up, and NEA is currently offering financial help, organizational savvy, and other incentives to its 9,000 locals to get on with the job. The national headquarters recommends to local teacher associations that they assist auxiliary personnel to form their own affiliate organization, but have a joint coordinating committee to mesh programs of the two groups. This format, it is felt, would help auxiliary personnel from being overwhelmed if they simply joined the existing teacher organization.[36]

This format, however, leads to an unpopular affiliation--one in which the paras are indebted and obligated to support any action of the union.

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[35] Paraprofessionals in Schools, p. 47.

[36] Ibid.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President David Selden told his union's 1970 convention:

> I want to make this simple assertion: Anyone who works for the board of education is a non-supervisory capacity and who is in a position to act as a scab or strikebreaker ought to be brought into the union. It is hard enough for teachers to muster the strength to win strikes without having to do it over the opposition of coworkers.[37]

Affiliation and membership within an organization whose intent it is to protect itself and teachers will not provide adequate representation for non-professional members. In addition, the needs of paras and teachers vary too greatly to be represented by a single force.

Union leaders admit frankly that putting teachers and teacher aides together in the same union can raise sticky problems. Some of these were reported in the February 1970 issue of American Teacher as follows:

> What happens when a paraprofessional has a grievance against me? asked a teacher in one Eastern city where AFT represents both teachers and aides.[38]

Such conflicts among co-workers become increased when represented by a common association. Undue pressures are often placed on the very individuals whose responsibilities include creating a positive learning environment for children

Representation by a common federation undermines the core relationships which are indicative of effective, progressive and innovative educational programs.

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[37] Ibid., p. 44.

[38] Ibid., p. 46

"A union derives its power from threatening to strike....." [39] With community support for education dwindling, and budgets straining to meet federal and state ordered requirements---a strike of paraprofessional personnel, though disruptive, would not have significant enough effect on the communities involved. These positions are highly desirable because of work schedules and replacement of personnel is an easily accomplished task. Paras must prove professionalism and a high degree of effectiveness, over an extended period of time. The field is too young, research and long range studies too sparse yet to indicate a proven, necessary, integral force in education.

In the process of fostering better education and administrative and community support, it seems in the best interest of all concerned to promote legally acceptable behavior ---- "Public employee strikes are illegal in all of the fifty states, either by statute of at common law." [40]

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[39] "American Education: The Problems Ahead". NASSP Bulletin, May, 1975, p. 27.

[40] Albert A. Blum, ed. Teacher Unions - A Comparative Study. Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1969, p. 318.

AREA ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH

Discontent among paraprofessional groups stems from various issues; poor administration, inferior benefits, lack of recognition, etc., but the end results are limited to a few:

1. long term inefficiency and ineffectiveness
2. militant demans by paras upon administration
3. affiliation with a national educational union for bargaining strength.

Each of these alternatives leads to a breakdown in the effectiveness of aide programs, reduces honest communication efforts, and induces defensiveness on the part of both paras and administrators.

Administrators must share the blame for many unfortunate verbal battles which have occurred in the past. If legal counsel is employed to bargain with paraprofessionals, they have no alternatives other than to seek the services of a professional negotiator, most readily available through state or national educational unions, as was the case in Keene, N. H.

In a recent interview with the Past-President/ Negotiating Team, Mrs. Muriel Robbins states,

> We (paraprofessionals) were of mixed feelings as we met the Labor Relations Board requirement for a certification election that took place in January, 1977.....internal matters led the membership to vote for no representation. This vote against formal NHEA representation led our Executive Board to withdraw the request for contract negotiations.
>
> We asked for and were granted, a meeting with Administration to discuss our concerns without the involvement of the School Board's professional negotiator.
>
> We feel satisfied to date that we have accomplished our goal of being recognized as part of the educational team with viable input for quality education in our District.[41]

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[41] Muriel Robbins, to Helene J. O'Brien.

Keene Paraprofessionals have not resolved all of their concerns, however, they are now able to discuss them openly with administration without the intervention of professional negotiators. A complex situation can mean positive outcomes if, and only if, both parties are willing to communicate their needs and concerns and deal realistically with both.

Chelmsford, Massachusetts paraprofessionals had not received a raise in several years, and were concerned with gaining fringe benefits, protecting their rights, and defining their role. These issues led them to seek bargaining clout.

In a correspondence with Ms. Marilyn West, she states:

> A small group realized that the aide program was not protected and we (paraprofessionals) had no say in its future development. We felt at the mercy of teachers, principals, etc. This negotiating process was accomplished by a representative group of aides and the school committee.
>
> Once we got the ball rolling, we did not want to become absorbed by a larger bargaining unit and lose our identity.
>
> We now have an extremely good contract, especially considering that we have done all of the language changes, from the first contract ourselves. Aides in Chelmsford now have many benefits including sick days, personal days, paid holidays, vacations, grievance prodedure, etc.[42]

Organization, effective leadership, and a strong desire to accomplish, have provided Chelmsford aides with the security they needed, without the assistance of a national affiliation.

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[42] Marilyn West, Member negotiating team, Chelmsford, Mass. Paraprofessionals, to Helene J. O'Brien, April, 1977.

Mrs. West concedes that professional negotiating assistance might have secured a better contract, however, they are quite satisfied because "they did it on their own."

These any many other groups are realizing that national affiliation for paraprofessionals is not a viable alternative at this time.

POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future expansion of the statewide organization offers unlimited opportunities. The most important feature of future growth is long-term effective leadership. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to encourage the participation of individuals, on state-level committees, capable of assuming positive, influential leadership roles. These individuals should be supportive of the overall objectives of the organization and actively committed to expanding the complementary/supportive role of the paraprofessional employed in education.

The responsibility of nurturing future leaders is one which the Board might readily cast-off as unimportant, however, without this ongoing process, the organization is doomed to ineffective leadership or to a complete reversal of direction, influenced by militant and strike-oriented participants. This association of paraprofessionals is NOT and should never be allowed to become a statewide agent of threat to educational administrators.

Future development of the organization must stress increased services to its membership. These services should be 'above and beyond' more extensive and intensive educational, informational, and supportive efforts.

Additional benefits might include providing consultation services to local groups. Experience and interaction with a variety of para groups and school administrative policies, along with an active interest in improving working relationships, may qualify individuals to offer their knowledge and expertise to assist and counsel local groups seeking viable directions and alternatives.

I believe the future expansion will include subdivision into regional groups which will allow districts which share similar cultural, economic, suburban or rural qualities to meet the more specific needs of their personnel within limited geographical boundaries.

The coordination of regional groups, additional and intensified services, and statewide conference planning will, in all likelihood, necessitate a permanent salaried position. This position would, then, become the liaison with the State Department of Education, and the coordinator of paraprofessional affairs, as well as associate to the personnel responsible for implementation of statewide certification standards.

REQUIREMENTS & CERTIFICATION FOR N. H. PARAPROFESSIONALS

Standards for an 'profession' are implemented most often to guarantee that potential employees have met minimum requirements and have developed the necessary skills to function effectively and productively in a specific 'career'.

Therefore it appears a complete ambiguity to establish certification standards and prodedures for paraprofessionals only to preceed them with:

> The ensuing requirements and certification standards for paraprofessionals are considered by the N. H. State Board of Education as optional in nature and not mandatory for school districts.[43]

Following are the entry level requirements, application procedures, and role descriptions of available paraprofessional certifications in New Hampshire:

EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATE

Entry Level Requirements

1. Hold a degree from a college or university accredited by the N. H. Post Secondary Education Commission

or 2. Have completed a two-year program or the equivalent approved by the State Board of Education where the major course of study is focused on education.

and 3. Have completed all training requirements as required for an Educational Aide and/or Educational Assistant. (see below).

Application Procedures

Candidates may obtain necessary forms and information by writing or applying to the Office of Teacher Education and Professional Standards, State House Annex, Concord, NH 03301

Role Description

This is a nonprofessional position and is under the

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[43] New Hampshire State Department of Education, Certification Standards for Educational Personnel in New Hampshire (Concord, NH) Section XIV

direction of a certified person. Functions may include direct contact with the instructional processes of the school. In addition, the Educational Associate may serve in an advisory capacity to the teacher in planning, programming, developing and monitoring the classroom program.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

Entry Level Requirements

1. High school diploma or its equivalent
and 2. One year's in-service training or one year of college with practicum in educational methodology or its equivalent
or 3. Have three years experience as an Educational Aide. (see below)

Application Procedures

Same as for Educational Associate.

Role Description

This is a nonprofessional position and is under the direction of a certified person. Tasks may include those requiring direct contact with the instructional processes of the school and should be undertaken only with supervision of a certified individual.

EDUCATIONAL AIDE

Entry Level Requirement

1. No specified preschooling required; high school diploma or its equivalent not required.
2. Orientation period (approximately two weeks) encompassing study in human development, social relations, school's goals and procedures: basic skill training appropriate to the trainee's role in the school. Upon verification of successful completion of this orientation, the Educational Aide License will be issued.

Application Procedure

Same as above.

Role Description

> One who carries out routine tasks that do not directly involve educational processes normally assigned to certified personnel. All functions are performed under the direction of a certified individual.[44]

POSSIBLE ALTERATION OF STANDARDS

The stated purpose of instituting standards for certification is to "provide guidelines for educational institutions in the State in the use of a wider variety of persons to support the educational functions of the school's goals." [45]

These standards, however, are not considered by the majority of the N. H. school districts, and employees have not even been made aware of their existence, until recently,by the N. H. Paraprofessionals.

Though the organization can disseminate information and encourage certification, its efforts are fruitless unless standards are utilized by local districts. Certification standards at different levels should be incorporated into local pay scales and/or career ladders.

Standards which require only payment of a $10.00 fee are not adequate, and offer no incentive for participation. I suggest that experience alone is not an adequate requirement for certification. Experience, combined with documentation of suggested competencies (see p. 35 & 36) by an immediate supervisor would offer greater validity and credibility.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

I propose,therefore, that in order to secure'associate' and 'assistant' certification, paraprofessionals must prove their effectiveness within an educational environment.

Certification could very effectively be linked to local'staff development programs'; i.e. that a minimum number of clock hours in a professional/personal growth program be required to maintain certification. Additional verified training credits would be necessary for higher level credentials.

Securing popular use of existing certification standards can be most effeciently undertaken at the local level. Implementation of state issued guidelines as criteria for'career ladders'and wage differentiation is a reasonable and appropriate request on the part of para groups. Statewide local application will promote greater activity in the Office of Professional Standards. This course will necessitate an increased allocation of funds and personnel; hopefully, creating the previously discussed coordinate position. A reasonable fee, I believe, for promoting and recognizing paraprofessionals as colleagues in the educational process of our youth. And, a more desirable alternative to national affiliation and the effects of its financial support.

SUMMARY

In summary, I conclude that proper implementation of paraprofessional programs can enable schools to simulate the kind of families high-achievers come from: warm, friendly, stimulating, encouraging, etc.,and can promote adequate experience essential to effective education.

However, the total effectiveness of paraprofessionals is in direct relation to:

1. the type of training made available,
2. the working/human relationships established with administrative and teaching personnel,
3. the self-esteem gained by official recognition as a 'new profession'.

Who teaches? Everyone does! That is why creative, community-wide programs of education are needed to combat youthful tragedies among rich and poor all over our country.

To anyone contemplating future research and experimentation concerning paraprofessionals in education, I suggest further studies may be directed toward:

- the evaluation of programs which place equal stress on instructional and social skills,
- the evaluation of candidate selection using proposed competencies/test/interview.
- follow-up of statewide organizational expansion,
- the expansion of the paraprofessional role to promote more effective student and student/teacher relationships,
- in depth analysis of proposed competencies to formulate specific, applicable training experiences.

APPENDIX A

WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION INFORMATION *

4th Annual Paraprofessional Conference
October 20, 21, 1977
Waterville Valley, New Hampshire

1) What is the title of your workshops? _____

2) How would you like your name(s) and title(s) listed?

3) Please write a brief description of your workshop (about 50 words) which could be used for the conference program?

4) Is there a specific grade level toward which your presentation will be aimed?

___preschool, ___ primary, ___ intermediate, ___elementary (1-6),

___secondary, ___ other (specify) _____ Check all that apply.

5) The content of this workshop could be classified as

___ for beginners only, ___ for those with some background, ___ advanced.

6) What will participants be able to do upon completion of your workshop? What competencies will they acquire?

7) What will be the presentation style of your session?

___lecture, ___ participatory, ___questions, ___discussions,

___audio-visual, ___ other (specify) _____.

8) Is there any major media you will need from us? _____ What? _____

Specific needs other than equipment (furniture, room arrangement, light control, etc.)?

9) What is the maximum number of participants you can handle? _____

Please return by: _____ signed _____

address _____

_____

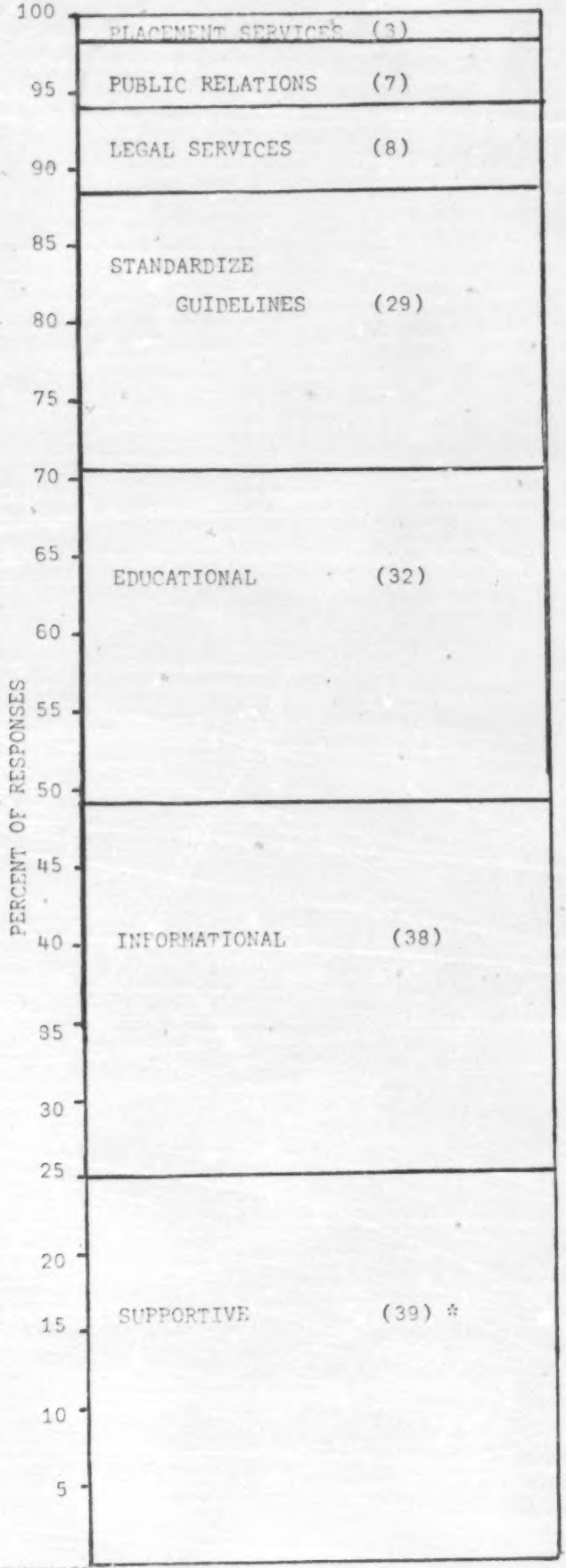
telephone _____

to: Nancy C. Craig
RFD 4 Box 214
Dover, N. H. 03820

*Designed by Mrs. Nancy Craig

APPENDIX B

SURVEY RESULTS CONCERNING FUNCTIONS OF STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION (156 RESPONSES).



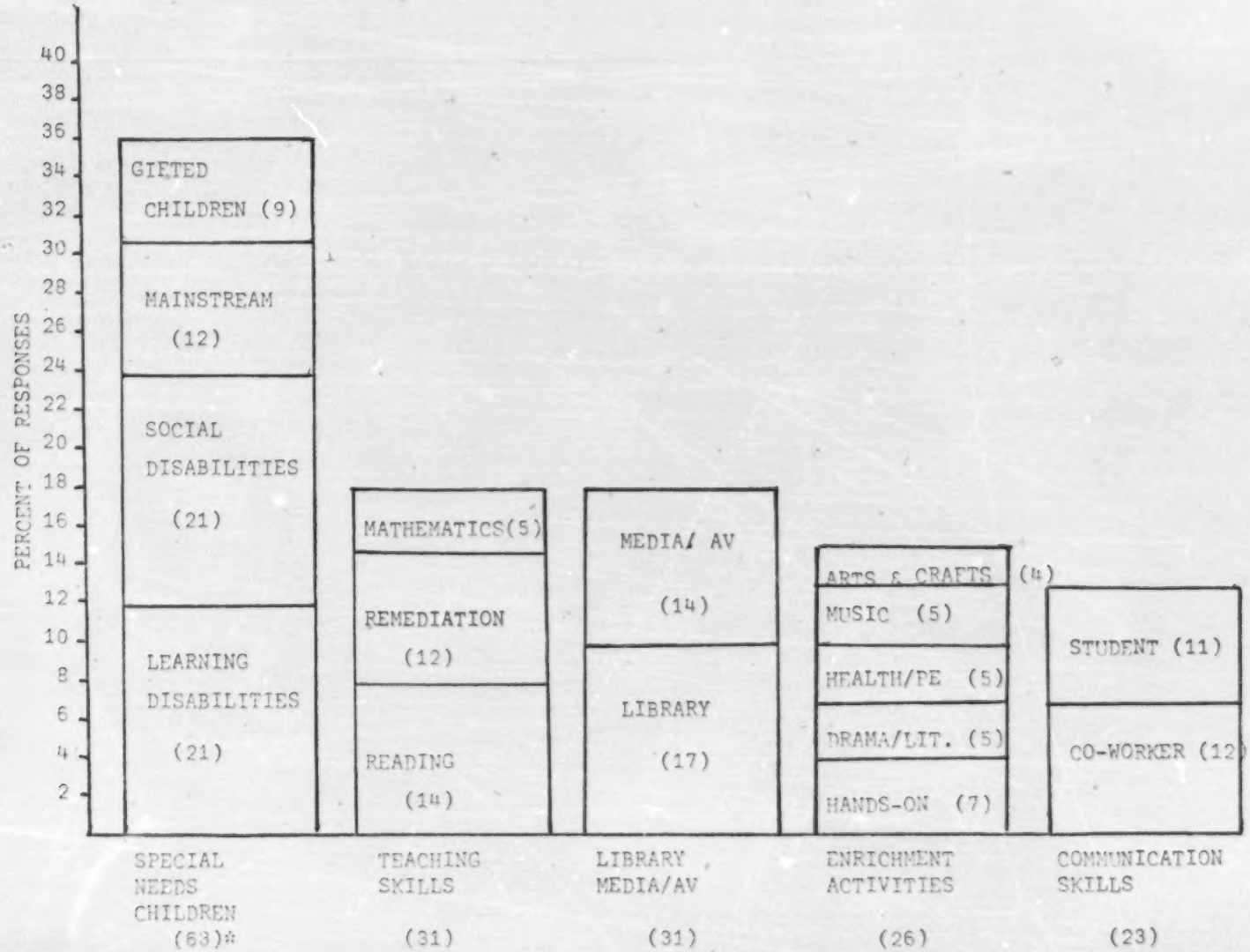
* NUMBER OF RESPONSES INCLUDED IN PARENTHESES

APPENDIX C

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

DATA COMPILATION OF SUGGESTED TOPICS

(177 RESPONSES)



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